**Amendments to the Claims**:

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims**:

**1-3. (Canceled)**

**4. (Currently Amended)** The method according to claim 31, wherein the resulting microparticles have an average particle diameter of 0.01[[.]] μm to 150 μm.

**5. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 31, wherein the resulting microparticle is a drug carrier.

**6. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 31, wherein the resulting microparticle is a sustained-release drug carrier.

**7. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 31, wherein the dilute solution before the crosslinking reaction contains a drug, and the drug is held in microparticles obtained after the crosslinking reaction.

**8. (Original)** The method according to claim 7, wherein the crosslinking reaction does not cause drug denaturation even in the presence of the drug.

**9-10. (Canceled)**

**11. (Withdrawn)** The method according to claim 1, wherein the crosslinking reaction is a reaction in which crosslinkages are formed by reaction between hydrazide group and an activated carboxylic acid ester.

**12-19. (Canceled)**

**20. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended)** The microparticle according to claim ~~12~~31, wherein the ~~crosslinkage~~ crosslinkable functional group is a mercapto group, and the crosslinking reaction is a reaction in which crosslinkages are formed by disulfide formation.

**21. (Canceled)**

**22. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended)** The microparticle according to claim ~~12~~31, wherein the crosslinking reaction is a reaction in which crosslinkages are

formed by reaction between a hydrazide group and an activated carboxylic acid ester.

**23. (Canceled)**

**24. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 4, wherein the resulting microparticle is a drug carrier.

**25. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 24, wherein the resulting microparticle is a sustained-release drug carrier.

**26. (Currently Amended)** the method according to claim 25, wherein the dilute solution before the crosslinking reaction contains a drug, and the ~~dug~~ drug is held in the microparticles obtained after the crosslinking reaction.

**27. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 26, wherein the crosslinking reaction does not cause drug denaturation even in the presence of the drug.

**28-30. (Canceled)**

**31. (Currently Amended)** A method for preparing crosslinked polysaccharide microparticles, which ~~comprise~~ comprises the following steps:

a) preparing a dilute solution containing (1) a polysaccharide derivative having at least one ~~crosslinkage~~ crosslinkable functional group in a range of 0.1 to 5%(w/v) and (2) a crosslinking agent;

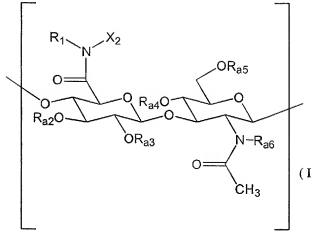
b) dispersing the solution by spraying to form microparticulate droplets; and

c) concentrating the solution contained in the droplets to facilitate a crosslinking addition reaction of the polysaccharide derivative between a mercapto group and a an unsaturated C-C bond;

wherein steps b) and c) are carried out in a spray drying procedure;

wherein the polysaccharide derivative is a hyaluronic acid derivative comprising at least one repeating unit represented by Formula (I);

~~[Formula I]~~



(I)

wherein $X_2$ represents ~~$-Y_1-Q_1-_2-N(-R_2)-Y_2-Q_2-SH$~~ $-Y_1-Q_1-Y_2-N(-R_2)-Y_3-Q_2-SH$, $-N(-R_2)-Y_3-Q_2-SH$, $-NHCO-(CH_2)_4-CONH-NH-C(=NH)-(CH_2)_3-SH$, ~~$-(CH_2)2-NH-C(-NH)-(CH_2)_3-SH-$~~ $(CH_2)_2-NH-C(=NH)-(CH_2)_3-SH$, or $-(CH_2)_2-O-(CH_2)_2-O-(CH_2)_2-NH-C(=NH)-(CH_2)_3-SH$,

$R_1$ represents a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched $C_{1-10}$ alkyl group, a linear or branched $C_{1-10}$ hydroxyalkyl group, a polyalkylene oxide group, a polypeptide group or a polyester group,

$R_{a2}$, $R_{a3}$, $R_{a4}$, $R_{a5}$ and $R_{a6}$ each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched $C_{1-6}$ alkyl group, a linear or branched ~~$C_{1-6}$ alkenyl~~ $C_{2-6}$ alkenyl group, a linear or branched ~~$C_{1-16}$ alkynyl~~ $C_{2-6}$ alkynyl group, a linear or branched $C_{1-16}$ alkylcarbonyl group, a linear or branched ~~$C_{2-6}$ alkenylcarbonyl~~ $C_{2-5}$ alkenylcarbonyl group, a linear or branched ~~$C_{1-16}$ alkynylcarbonyl~~ $C_{2-6}$ alkynylcarbonyl group or $-SO_2OH$,

$Y_1$ represents a single bond, $-N(-R_3)CO-$, $-N(-R_3)-$, $-CO-$ or $-CH_2CO-$,

$Y_2$ represents a single bond, $-CON(-R_4)-$ or $-N(-R_4)-$,

$Q_1$ represents a linear or branched $C_{1-10}$ alkylene group, a linear or branched $C_{1-10}$ hydroxyalkylene group, a polyalkylene oxide group, a polypeptide group or a polyester group,

$R_2$, $R_3$ and $R_4$ each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a ~~liner~~ linear or branched $C_{1-10}$ alkyl group, a linear or branched $C_{1-10}$ hydroxyalkyl group, a polyalkylene oxide group, a polypeptide group or a polyester group,

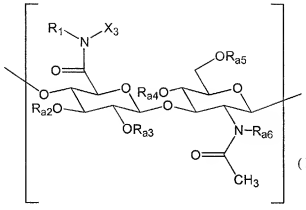
$Y_3$ represents a single bond, $-CO-$, $-CO_2-$, $-CH_2-CH(OH)-$ or $-CONH-$, and

$Q_2$ represents a linear or branched $C_{1-10}$ alkylene group, a linear or branched $C_{1-10}$ hydroxyalkylene group, a polyalkylene oxide group, a polypeptide group or a polyester group,

and the crosslinking agent is a compound having two or more unsaturated C-C bond-containing groups; or

the polysaccharide derivative is a hyaluronic acid derivative comprising at least one repeating unit represent by Formula (II):

~~[Formula 2]~~




(II)

wherein $X_3$ represents $-Y_1-Q_1-Y_2-N(-R_2)-Y_3-Q_4$ or ~~$-n(-R_2)-Y_3-Q_4$~~ $-N(-R_2)-Y_3-Q_4$,

$R_1$ represents a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched $C_{1-10}$ alkyl group, a linear or branched $C_{1-10}$ hydroxyalkyl group, a polyalkylene oxide group, a polypeptide group or a polyester group,

$R_{a2}$, $R_{a3}$, $R_{a4}$, $R_{a5}$ and $R_{a6}$ each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched $C_{1-6}$ alkyl group , a linear or branched ~~$C_{1-6}$ alkenyl~~ $C_{2-6}$ alkenyl group, a linear or branched ~~$C_{1-16}$ alkynyl~~ $C_{2-6}$ alkynyl group, a linear or branched ~~$C_{1-16}$ alkylcarbonyl~~ $C_{1-6}$ alkylcarbonyl group, a linear or branched ~~$C_{1-6}$ alkenylcarbonyl~~ $C_{2-6}$ alkenylcarbonyl group, a linear or branched ~~$C_{2-16}$ alkynylcarbonyl~~ $C_{2-6}$ alkynylcarbonyl group or $-SO_2OH$,

$Y_1$ represents a single bond, $-N(-R_3)CO-$, $-N(-R_3)-$, $-CO-$ or $-CH_2CO-$,

$Y_2$ represents a single bond, $-CON(-R_4)-$ or $-N(-R_4)-$,

$Y_3$ represents a single bond, -CO- or $-CH_2CO-$,

$Q_1$ represents a linear or branched $C_{1-10}$ alkylene group, a linear or branched $C_{1-10}$ hydroxyalkylene group, a polyalkylene oxide group, a polypeptide group or a polyester group,

$R_2$, $R_3$ and $R_4$ each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a ~~liner~~ linear or branched $C_{1-10}$ alkyl group, a linear or branched $C_{1-10}$ hydroxyalkyl group, a polyalkylene oxide group, a polypeptide group or a polyester group,

$Q_4$ represents a linear or branched $C_{2-10}$ alkenyl group, a linear or branched $C_{2-10}$ alkynyl group,
and the crosslinking agent is a compound having two or more mercapto groups.

**32. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 5, wherein the crosslinked polysaccharide microparticles are injectable.

**33. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 5, wherein the drug is a protein.

**34. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 6, wherein the sustained release period of the carrier is 24 hours or more.

**35. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 6, wherein the sustained release period of the carrier is 5 days or more.

**36. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 6, wherein the drug is released upon enzymatic digestion.